

Chapter 6

STANDARDS AND TRAINING FOR CORRECTIONS

The Legislature established the Standards and Training for Corrections (STC) program in 1979 to improve the hiring and training of corrections personnel working in local jails, probation departments, and juvenile halls, ranches and camps. The law directed the BOC to develop statewide selection and training standards for local corrections personnel and a statewide training delivery system. The BOC, via its STC division, also administers a statewide subvention to assist counties and cities with the cost of meeting selection and training standards.

STC provided 1,082,834 hours of training to 25,279 local corrections personnel in FY 1996/97, and 1,129,668 total training hours to 25,910 staff in FY 1997/98. STC also accomplished the following during fiscal years 1996/97 and 1997/98:

- Administered 44,102 written entry examinations to job candidates, resulting in the hiring of 8,305 local corrections employees.
- Certified 137 entry-level training courses and 4,061 journey-level courses that assisted over 51,180 trainees through 14,720 course presentations.
- Disbursed \$18.9 million to local agencies to offset training costs.

Statewide evaluation data indicate that STC's selection criteria and job-related training curricula have had a substantial impact on local corrections, including:

- Increased job skills and professionalism;
- Reduced injuries to staff and offenders;
- Substantially less litigation and court intervention; and
- Greater safety and effectiveness in operating facilities and programs.

Participation and Compliance

Participation in STC is voluntary. Local corrections agencies choosing to participate must agree to conform to the standards established by the BOC. Currently, there are 167 participating agencies (59 probation departments, 54 sheriff departments, 48 police departments that operate city jails, 3 county departments of corrections, and 3 juvenile institutions, camps and ranches). Figure 12 shows the number of local corrections staff positions participating in STC during fiscal years 1996/97 and 1997/98.

Key to STC participation is an annual training plan developed by local officials after assessing hiring and training needs. STC staff monitors the progress of each participating department and meets with appropriate local officials to review, revise and update the plan. At the end of each

year, the departments and STC conduct a comprehensive review of the plan's goals to determine compliance with selection and training standards and assist in future planning.

Figure 12

PARTICIPATING STAFF BY CATEGORY

	Fiscal Year 1996/97	Fiscal Year 1997/98
Corrections Officers	12,742	12,808
Probation Officers	4,385	4,582
Juvenile Counselors	4,546	4,851
Supervisors	2,502	2,576
Managers	822	807
Administrators	282	286
TOTAL	25,279	25,910

STC conducts on-site monitoring of every department at the end of each fiscal year to determine adherence to the minimum selection and training standards. In FY 1996/97, STC found that 160 agencies were in compliance, and in FY 1997/98, 153 agencies were in compliance. This level of success is significant in light of the fiscal constraints under which local departments operated. BOC staff works with departments not in compliance to develop action plans for achieving compliance within the next fiscal year.

Funding

The Legislature created the Corrections Training Fund (CTF), which derives its revenues from court fines and penalty assessments, to provide financial assistance to counties and cities in meeting statewide selection and training standards for local corrections. The financial condition of the CTF, one of eight special funds that comprise the State Penalty Fund, directly impacts the amount of local assistance money available.

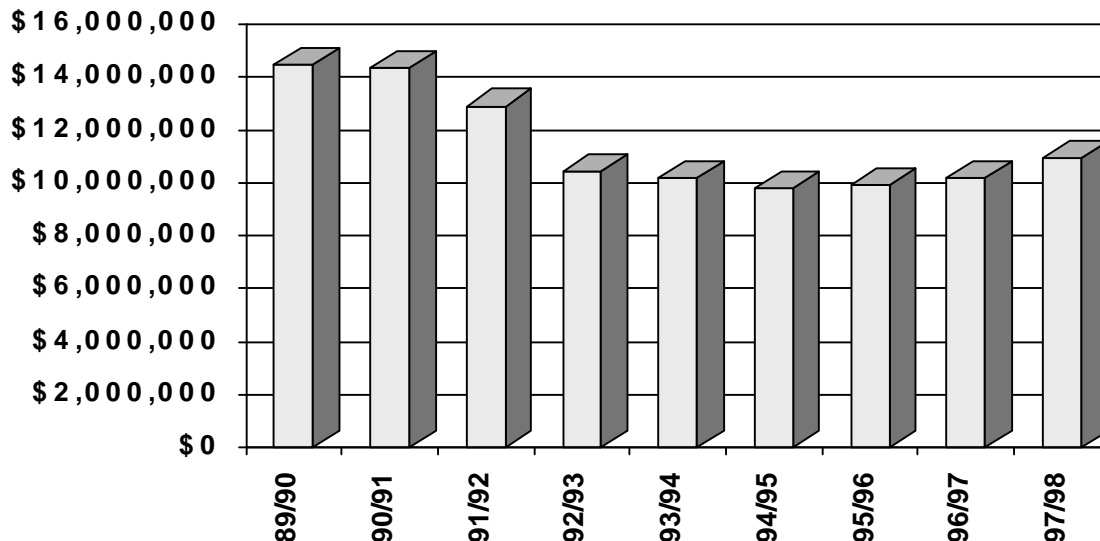
Figure 13 shows that the CTF declined from its peak of \$14.5 million in FY 1989/90 to \$10.3 million in FY 1997/98, a drop of approximately 29 percent. During this same period, the number of local corrections personnel to be trained increased about 20 percent. The combined effect of declining funds and increasing staff resulted in CTF funds offsetting only 28 percent of local training costs.

STC uses a per capita funding mechanism to ensure that available funds are fairly and equitably distributed to local agencies. Declining CTF revenues resulted in a significant reduction in per capita funding available to local corrections agencies during fiscal years 1996/97 and 1997/98. Appendix I lists training funds allocated to counties during this period; Appendix J provides the same information for cities.

The 1998/99 Budget Act includes a \$6.5 million continuing augmentation to the CTF. As a result of this infusion of funds, the BOC anticipates that per capita local assistance levels will be restored to the 1989/90 level, covering as much as 50 percent of actual training costs incurred by local agencies.

Figure 13

CORRECTIONS TRAINING FUND



Entry Level Selection and Training Standards

The BOC's selection standards for local corrections officers, probation officers and juvenile counselors include validated selection exams to measure basic abilities and characteristics for successful job performance. Figure 14 shows statewide use of the BOC's selection exams over the past decade.

In addition to the written examination, the BOC's selection criteria require: competence in oral communication as demonstrated by an interview; the ability to perform essential job functions as demonstrated by meeting the BOC's guidelines for vision, hearing, and medical screening; passing a background investigation conducted by the agency; and the successful completion of entry-level core training and an on-the-job probationary period.

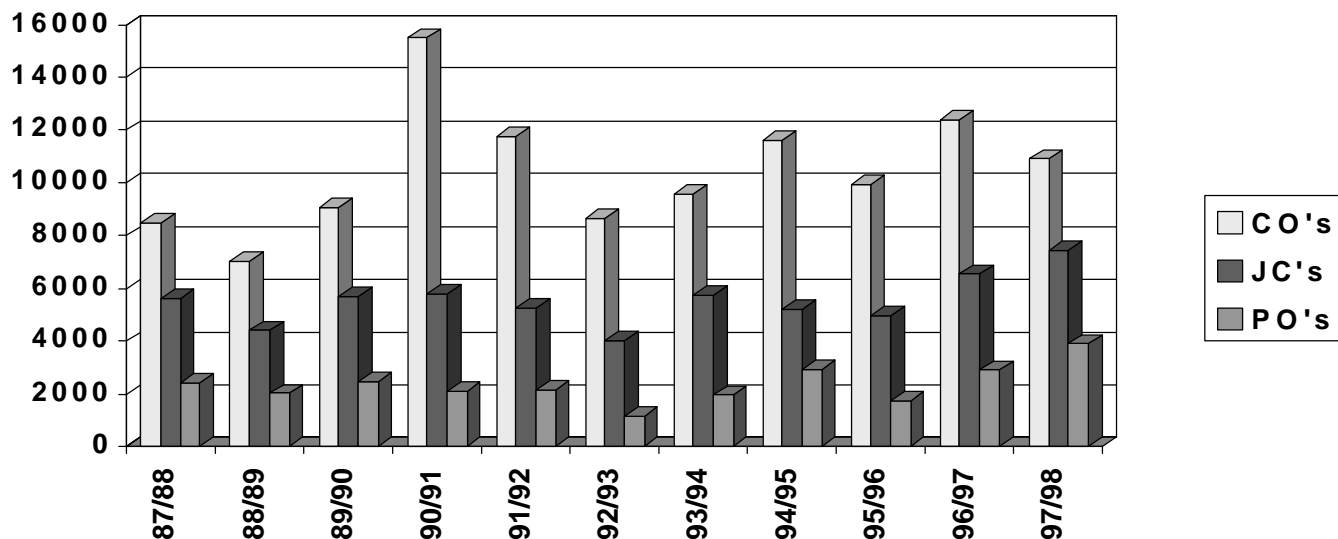
STC has also established statewide training standards for entry-level classifications. The core training curricula for these positions are based on a comprehensive, statewide job-task analysis involving incumbents, their supervisors, and subject matter experts who identified necessary job tasks and the required level of performance of those tasks.

STC developed the original core curricula in 1987 and revised them in 1990 and 1994 to reflect changes in job tasks. STC revised the probation officer core curriculum in 1998 to reflect an expanded job task analysis focusing on physical abilities necessary to perform the job. BOC staff will begin the process of updating core curricula for the correction officer and juvenile

counselor positions next year. To be effective, the standards must continue to be relevant, legally defensible and valid. The BOC's validation process occurs every three years and involves an extensive analysis of the job task, input from subject matter experts, and ongoing evaluation and research.

Figure 14

LOCAL CORRECTIONS CANDIDATES TESTED BY POSITION



STC Training and Delivery System

The STC training delivery system includes over 2,000 different courses each year. In fiscal years 1996/97 and 1997/98, this translated into over 14,700 course presentations by public and private entities. STC must certify all training courses before presentation. In doing so, STC reviews the course for job-relevancy, instructor qualifications, cost-effectiveness, and quality skills development. Courses fall into two categories: core courses to develop necessary skills for newly hired and/or promoted personnel, and annual courses to maintain proficiency or develop new skills for experienced personnel.

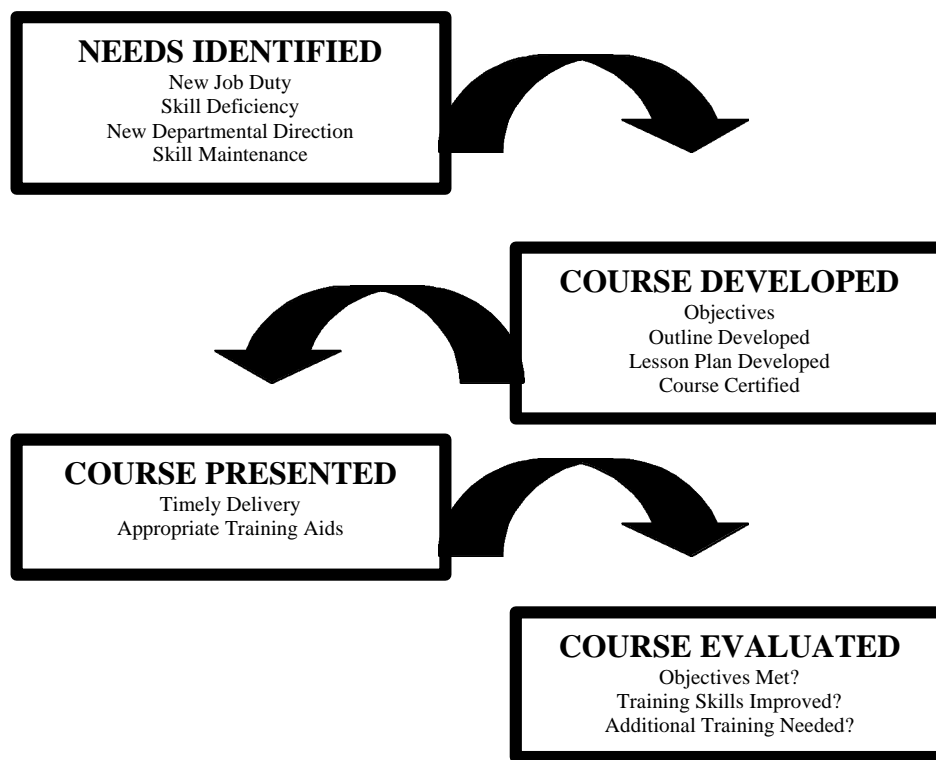
Each newly hired or promoted local corrections worker must successfully complete a core course within the first year of job assignment. The three entry-level core courses for corrections officers, juvenile counselors and probation officers cover such topics as codes and statutes, inmate classification, drug abuse, report writing, and defensive tactics. Core course training for managers, administrators and supervisors addresses such topics as information systems, communications, fiscal management, labor relations, performance appraisals and evaluations, motivation of staff, safety in the workplace and discipline procedures.

Once entry-level skills are developed through the core training curriculum, local corrections employees move on to mastery of journey-level skills through annual training, which provides in-depth coverage of topics that enhance skills and update employees on changes in their specific job assignments. This journey-level training is available through STC for all levels of

corrections personnel (line staff through top management) and involves from 24 to 40 hours of annually required instruction. As illustrated in Figure 15, local corrections agencies follow a systematic process for delivering annual training. This system promotes quality training in an era of limited time and resources by focusing on the most important needs. The STC division has certified more than 1900 annual training courses, all aimed at helping local corrections operate at maximum effectiveness.

Figure 15

Needs Assessment & Training Delivery Process



Recognizing the unique training needs which often confront local corrections agencies, the BOC offers three alternatives to STC-certified training for meeting the annual training requirement. These alternatives provide local flexibility while preserving and focusing on training integrity.

Special Certification Training addresses a unique job responsibility. Courses which may receive special certification include training for chemical agents instructors, and for personnel conducting background investigations of potential employees.

Intensified Format Training consists of short interventions that focus on one or two skills such as radio training; handcuff use; computer security; reading rap sheets; and court motions. Since this alternative often relies on the use of internal experts, this approach allows agency administrators and training managers to identify and develop in-house instructors and subject matter experts.

Work-Related Education, Training, and Professional Development enhances an employee's overall work performance and increases the value of that employee's contribution to the organization. Examples include: post-secondary instruction leading to certification or a degree; academic courses in criminology and penology; and leadership programs.

Course Evaluation and Tracking

In addition to requiring written course evaluations from each trainee, STC conducts on-site monitoring of 5 percent of all courses annually. The purpose of on-site monitoring by STC staff is to cross reference trainee ratings against actual classroom presentations in terms of overall quality and adherence to course certification agreements.

STC has computerized its major data collection operations, enabling BOC staff to: compare training courses; evaluate course relevancy; monitor program growth; determine trends in hiring and retention; maintain core job skills relevancy; and monitor cost-effectiveness of certified courses.

The Future

Proper staff selection and training will continue to be critical issues for local corrections agencies. Changes in technology, statutory and case law, professional practices, social issues and demographics drive the need to constantly update staff selection and training practices. In addition, the recent infusion of funds for the construction and expansion of local detention facilities will increase staff recruitment and training needs, particularly in the juvenile arena.

While the STC program has proven to be a low cost producer of high quality staff selection and training, the future will bring changes requiring adaptations and new directions for the program. STC has already begun redesigning program operations and training delivery in order to address such emerging trends as:

- Availability of increasingly sophisticated computer systems at lower costs;
- Increasing state and local agency access to the Internet;
- The World Wide Web as a means of information dissemination;
- Electronic forms management;
- E-mail;
- Distance learning; and
- Multimedia performance-based training.

As STC adapts to these trends, the program will improve its ability to assist local agencies in achieving a high quality of staff selection and training, thereby contributing to the safe and effective operation of local detention facilities.